

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1-15 (Canceled)

16 (Currently Amended) A process for the production of water-soluble or water-swellaable cationic polymers by:

(i) free-radically initiating copolymerization of monomer mixtures in water comprising

(a) from 1 to 99 % by weight of a at least one cationic monomer or quaternizable monomer selected from the group consisting of 3-methyl-1-vinylimidazolium chloride; 3-methyl-1-vinylimidazolium methosulfate; dimethyldiallylammonium chloride; N,N-dimethylaminoethyl methacrylate quaternized by methyl chloride, dimethyl sulfate or diethyl sulfate; and N-[3-(dimethylamino)propyl]methacrylamide quaternized by methyl chloride, dimethyl sulfate or diethyl sulfate;

(b) from 1 to 99 % by weight of a at least one water-soluble monomer selected from the group consisting of a N-vinyl lactam, a N-vinylacetamide, a N-vinylformamide, a N-methyl-N-vinylacetamide, an acrylamide, a methacrylamide, a N,N-dimethylacrylamide, a N-methylolmethacrylamide, a N-vinyloxazolidone, a N-vinyltriazole, a hydroxyalkyl (meth)acrylate, an alkylethylene glycol (meth)acrylate having 1 to 50 ethylene glycol units in the molecule, butadiene,  $\alpha$ -alkene, vinylcyclohexane, vinylhalogenide, acrylonitrile, an aryl (alk)acrylate in which the alkyl group consists of 1-12 carbon atoms, an alkyl (alk)acrylamide in which the alkyl group consists of 1-12 carbon atoms, an aryl(alk)acrylamide in which the alkyl group consists of

1-12 carbon atoms, acrylic acid, an anhydride of acrylic acid, methacrylic acid, an anhydride of methacrylic acid, crotonic acid, an anhydride of crotonic acid, itaconic acid, an anhydride of itaconic acid, maleic acid, an anhydride of maleic acid, fumaric acid, an anhydride of fumaric acid, and acrylamidomethylpropanesulfonic acid;

- (c) from 0 to 10 % by weight of a at least one bi- or polyfunctional, free-radically copolymerizable monomer selected from the group consisting of an acrylic ester, a methacrylic ester, an allyl ether, a vinyl ether of a dihydric alcohol, a aliphatic or aromatic hydrocarbon having at least two, non-conjugated double bonds, an acrylamide, a methacrylamide, and a N-allylamine;

adjusting the amounts (a) to (c) in such a way that the resulting polymer has an overall positive charge,

in the presence of 1 to 100% of the amount of a salt which is necessary to saturate the reaction medium with said salt and in the presence of 0.1 to 20 % by weight referred to the weight of the dispersion, of an amphoteric dispersant having an overall negative charge

~~and ii) subsequent quaternization of the polymer if the monomer (a) employed is a non-quaternized monomer.~~

17 (Currently Amended) The process according to claim 16, where the amphoteric dispersant is a copolymer of [[a]] at least partly hydrolyzed vinylformamide units and acrylate units.

18 (Previously Presented) The process according to claim 16, where the amphoteric dispersant is a copolymer of dimethylaminoethylmethacrylamide units and acrylate units.

19 (Previously Presented) The process according to claim 16, wherein the amphoteric dispersant has an overall negative charge at pH = 6.75.

20 (Previously Presented) A dispersion comprising water-soluble or water-swellaable cationic polymers obtained by a process according to claim 16.

21 (Previously Presented) A method for dewatering, comprising:

adding the dispersion as claimed in claim 20 to water.

22 (Previously Presented) A method for dewatering, comprising:

adding the dispersion as claimed in claim 20 to a dewatering process.

23 (Previously Presented) A method for clarifying watering, comprising:

adding the dispersion as claimed in claim 20 to a water clarification system.

24 (Previously Presented) A method for making paper, comprising:

adding the dispersion as claimed in claim 20 to a papermaking process.

25 (Previously Presented) A method for producing oil, comprising:

adding the dispersion as claimed in claim 20 to an oil field operation.

26 (Previously Presented) A method for conditioning soil, comprising:

adding the dispersion as claimed in claim 20 to soil.

27 (Previously Presented) A method for processing minerals, comprising:

adding the dispersion as claimed in claim 20 to a mineral processing system.

28 (Previously Presented) A method for producing a hair or skin cosmetic,  
comprising:

adding the dispersion as claimed in claim 20 to a hair or skin cosmetic  
formulation.

29 (Previously Presented) A hair or skin cosmetic comprising the hair or skin  
cosmetic formulation produced by the method as claimed in claim 28.

30 (Previously Presented) A biotechnological method comprising utilizing the  
dispersion as claimed in claim 20 in a biotechnological application.

31 (New): The process according to claim 16, wherein  
said at least one cationic monomer or quaternizable monomer of (a) is present in an  
amount of from 5 to 80% by weight;  
said at least one water-soluble monomer of (b) is present in an amount of from 20 to  
95% by weight; and  
said at least one bi- or polyfunctional, free-radically copolymerizable monomer of (c)  
is present in an amount of from 0 to 5% by weight.

32 (New): The process according to claim 16, wherein  
said at least one cationic monomer or quaternizable monomer of (a) is present in an  
amount of from 10 to 40% by weight;

said at least one water-soluble monomer of (b) is present in an amount of from 40 to 90% by weight; and

said at least one bi- or polyfunctional, free-radically copolymerizable monomer of (c) is present in an amount of from 0 to 2.5% by weight.

33 (New): The process according to claim 16, wherein said amphoteric dispersant having an overall negative charge is made by free-radical initiated polymerizing of monomers comprising

(a') from 40 to 80% by weight of acrylic acid, ethacrylic acid, 2-Acrylamido-2-methylpropanesulfonic acid, an ammonium salt thereof, an alkalimetalic salt thereof, or a mixture thereof; and

(b') from 5 to 50% by weight of methyl vinylimidazolium, methyl vinylimidazolium chloride, trimethyl ammonium propyl methacrylate (chloride salt), trimethyl ammonium propyl methacrylate (methyl sulfate salt), trimethyl ammonium propylmethacrylate (ethyl sulfate salt), trimethyl ammonium propylacrylamide (chloride salt), dimethyldiallyl ammonium chloride, vinyl amine, or a combination thereof;

in which the ratio of monomer (a') to (b') is such that the polymer has an overall negative charge at pH 6.75.

34 (New): The process according to claim 16, wherein said at least one cationic monomer or quaternizable monomer of (a) is at least one of 3-methyl-1-vinylimidazolium chloride, 3-methyl-1-vinylimidazolium methosulfate, and N-[3-(dimethylamino)propyl] methacrylamide quaternized by one of methyl chloride, dimethyl sulfate and diethyl sulfate.

35 (New): The process according to claim 16, wherein said at least one cationic monomer or quaternizable monomer of (a) is at least one of 3-methyl-1-vinylimidazolium chloride and 3-methyl-1-vinylimidazolium methosulfate.

36 (New): A dispersion obtained by the process according to claim 16, exhibiting a stability of greater than 1 month.

37 (New): The process according to claim 16, wherein said at least one water-soluble monomer of (b) is N-vinylpyrrolidone, N-vinylformamide, or both.

38 (New): The process according to claim 16, wherein said amphoteric disperant having an overall negative charge is made by a process comprising free-radical initiated polymerizing of monomers in water comprising:

- (a') from 1 to 99% by weight of an anionic monomer selected from the group consisting of (meth)acrylic acid, ethacrylic acid, maleic acid, itaconic acid, 2-acrylamido-2-methylpropansulfonic acid, vinyl sulfonic acid, vinylphosphoric acid, styrol sulfuric acid, and an ammonium or alkalimetalic salt thereof;
- (b') from 1 to 99% by weight of a cationic monomer or quaternizable monomer selected from the group consisting of dimethylsulfate, diethylsulfate, a MeCl quarternized vinylimidazole, a dialkylaminoalkyl(alk)acrylate, a dialkylaminoalkylacrylamide, a diallylalkyl ammonium, and vinylamine;
- (c') from 0 to 98% by weight of a neutral monomer selected from the group consisting of N-vinylpyridine, N-vinylacetamide, N-vinylpyrrolidone, hydroxyalkyl(meth)acrylate, acrylamide, methacrylamide, vinyl formamide, a PEG-acrylate and methacrylate compound, N-vinylcaprolactam butadiene,  $\alpha$ -

alkene, vinylcyclohexane, vinylhalogenide, acrylnitrile, an aryl (alk)acrylate in which the alkyl group consists of 1-12 carbon atoms, an alkyl (alk)acrylamide in which the alkyl group consists of 1-12 carbon atoms, an aryl(alk)acrylamide in which the alkyl group consists of 1-12 carbon atoms, and adjusting the amounts (a') to (b') in such a way that the resulting polymer has an overall negative charge.